



March 4, 2016

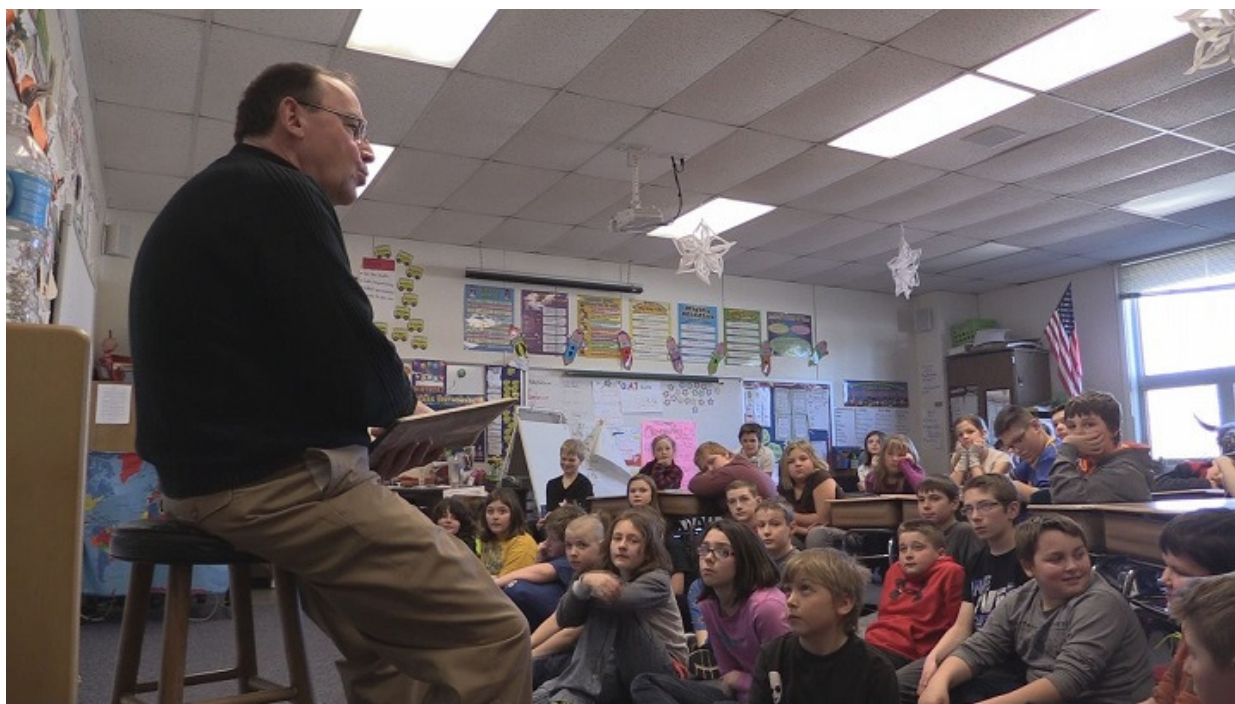
Read Across America

This week, I visited several schools across my district to participate in Read Across America Week.

Some of the most fulfilling time spent with my children was reading to them and their classmates in their early grades. Reading is very enriching for children and I encourage all parents to regularly read to their kids.

Read Across America officially took place March 2, but I visited schools and encouraged students to read all week long. I decided to read *Pigs is Pigs* by Ellis Parker Butler. It's a humorous story about a railway worker who claims two guinea pigs should be charged the livestock rate to be shipped instead of the lower domestic pet price because, well, "pigs is pigs." The railway worker then ends up getting stuck with the guinea pigs and they reproduce very quickly. By the end of the story, the railway worker is ready to accept the pet price for any future livestock.

On Monday, I read at both Jefferson Elementary and Kate Goodrich Elementary in Merrill.



(Sen. Tiffany reading at Jefferson Elementary)



(Sen. Tiffany reading at Jefferson Elementary)

On Tuesday, I read at Elcho Elementary and Mattoon Elementary and then on Thursday I read in Crivitz and Wausaukee.

When I read in Mattoon, the students had a poem written about Read Across America. I thought it'd be nice to share it with you.

It's Read Across America
To Honor Theodore Seuss Geisel
We're trying to rhyme
But not nearly as well.
So thank you, oh thank you
Senator Tiffany
For coming to Mattoon
And reading with me.
We know you are busy
Representing our state
So having you here
With us is first rate;
To show reading is important
And it can be fun
It even comes in handy
With legislating to be done.
Like your job, it's not easy
Ready these rhymes
So we're extra grateful
That you took the time.
So children of Mattoon
Oh Say can you say|
Hip, hip, hooray
To Senator Tiffany
For reading today?



(Sen. Tiffany reading at Crivitz Elementary)



(Sen. Tiffany reading at Crivitz Elementary)

At Wausauke Elementary, on Thursday, it was dress up like what you want to be when you grow up!



(Sen. Tiffany and Ms. Tracy - Wausauke District Reading Specialist - with student dressed up for Read Across America Week)



(Sen. Tiffany reading at Wausaukee Elementary)

To finish up the week, today I read at Tomahawk Elementary School.



(Sen. Tiffany talking with students at Tomahawk Elementary)

Photo Credit: Thank you to Lane Kimble from Channel 12 News in Rhinelander for sharing pictures from Jefferson Elementary. You can read the story he did [here](#).

Also, thank you to the teachers and administrators at all the schools for their hospitality and sharing photos with me. I had a great time speaking to your students and I hope I'll be back next year.

Bill Signings

This week the Governor signed over 100 bills into law - including five pieces of legislation that I authored.

This included:

Senate Bill 300 - is meant to clarify the sales tax associated with the purchase of a digital song or by the end user of a jukebox. An example would be when a person puts \$1.00 into a jukebox, selects two plays and listens to the music, the jukebox owner pays sales tax on the full \$1.00 purchase.

- 5.5% sales tax paid on the full \$1.00 accounts for \$.055 to DOR

- \$.20 is paid on that \$1.00 to music provider

Current Department of Revenue rules dictate the jukebox owner pays a second sales and use tax on the \$.20 ($$.20 * 5.5\% = \$.011$). With new jukeboxes streaming music where there used to be records or cds, it has resulted in the jukebox owner paying taxes on what they pay AMI or Touchtunes who provided the song on the jukebox. Representative Swearingen and I found this unacceptable and authored a bill to remove this burdensome tax incidence. This bill clarifies that the jukebox owner would continue to pay the original sales tax when the \$1.00 is put in the machine but not the additional \$.011 the Department of Revenue is requiring. Senate Bill 300 was signed by the Governor this week and is now 2015 Wisconsin Act 251.



Senate Bill 605 - clarifies that at the point of kill in a small game night hunt, hunters can use any battery-operated light such as hand held flashlights, one worn on the body, attached to clothing or a light attached to a firearm.



Senate Bill 392 - prohibits the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) from promulgating or enforcing a rule that requires gas stations to have a public telephone available for contacting emergency services.



Senate Bill 435 - exempts the naturally shed or lawfully taken feathers of grouse, partridge, pheasant, quail, or wild turkey from the current general prohibitions against the sale, purchase, barter or trade of wild animals.



Senate Bill 436 - Currently the Department of Natural Resources provides around \$2 million annually in grant funds to local qualified organizations and governments to control and treat established populations of AIS. Senate Bill 436 will stream line the grant process allowing those local organizations to continue their work on containing an identified AIS breakout. When an AIS is identified, it is important that local volunteers and DNR experts move quickly to contain the outbreak. Streamlining the grant process will allow resources to quickly flow to an identified AIS with the hopes of containing the outbreak before it spreads. Senate Bill 436 was signed by the Governor this week and is now 2015 Wisconsin Act 250.



Broadband Council

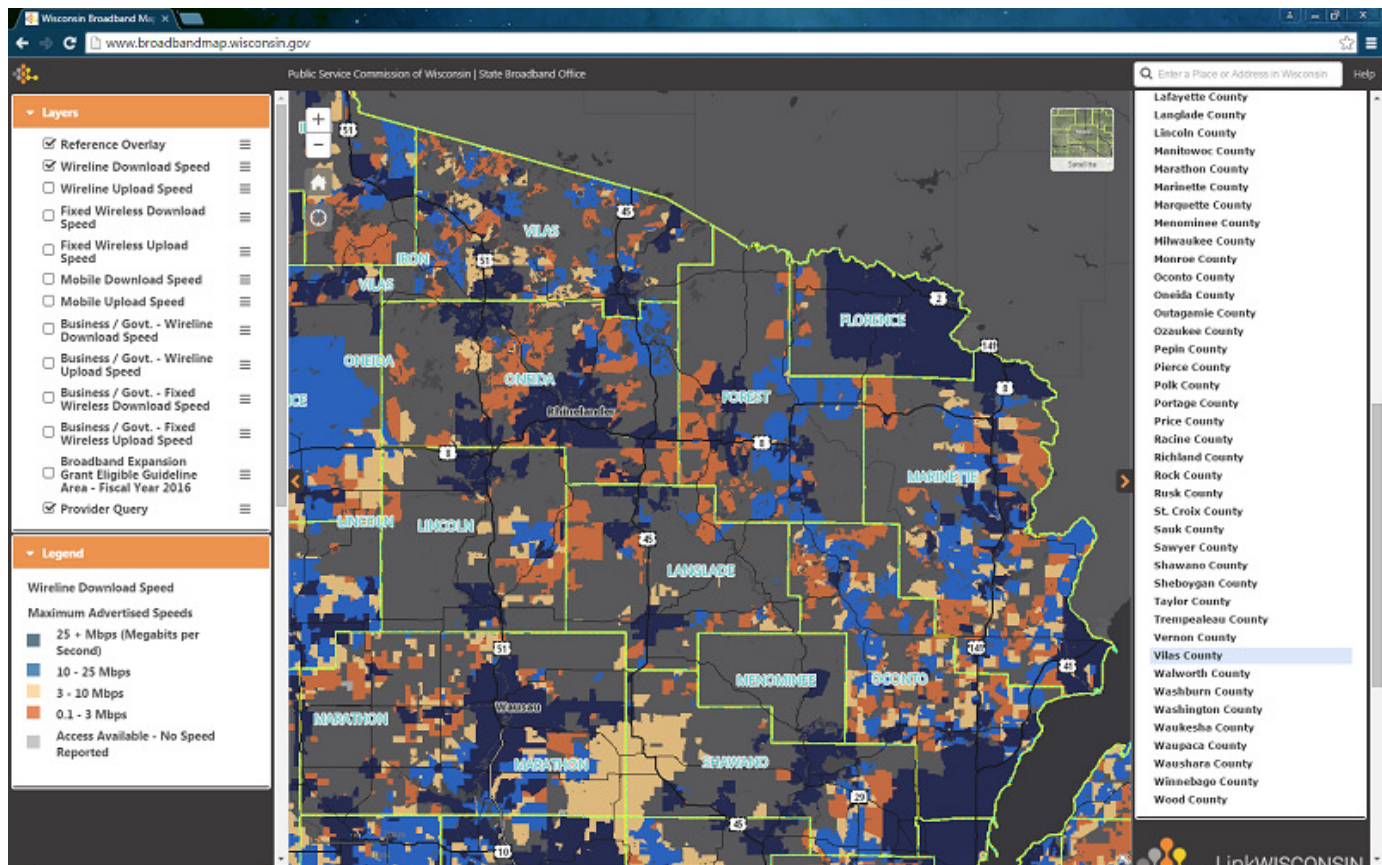
Broadband expansion continues to be one of my top priorities and I was recently appointed to the Broadband Stakeholder Workgroup. In short, the state's efforts in broadband expansion is overseen by the Public Service Commission, and contains five primary areas of focus:

- Data collection
- Outreach, training, and web presence
- Planning
- Interagency coordination and stakeholder relations
- Administration of broadband grants.

In this week's update I would like to focus on interagency coordination and stakeholder relations. This area of focus is perhaps the most important as it gathers all broadband-related stakeholders and agencies to the Wisconsin Broadband Stakeholder Workgroup.

I was excited to join the workgroup as a new member for its first quarterly meeting this week. Stakeholders represented in these discussions include, lawmakers, the State Broadband Office, Wisconsin's Chief Information Officer, UW and UW-Extension, AT&T, CenturyLink, Frontier Communications, WI State Telecommunications Association, Department of Public Instruction, and the Department of Justice.

This week's meeting began with an update of the State Broadband Office (SBO) by its Director, Angie Dickison. The SBO is in the process of extensive data collection for use in its recently published broadband map that is available to the public at <http://www.broadbandmap.wisconsin.gov/>. Invaluable functions of this map include a visualization of the state's broadband condition and the ability to locate providers based on location.



An update was given on the federal money that Wisconsin will receive from phase two of the Connect America Fund, also known as CAF-II. Funding for this federal program, designed for developing broadband in rural areas of the country, comes from the Universal Service Fund surcharge that shows up on your monthly phone bills. This surcharge is collected by the Federal Communications Commission to provide telecommunications aid to schools, libraries, rural healthcare providers, low-income individuals, and high-cost areas. Connect American Fund is a special account for the aid to high cost areas across the country. Wisconsin will receive \$95.4 million, the second largest allocation in the country, to be spent on rural and underserved areas.

UW-Extension and the SBO are collaborating on an effort to share broadband information with the public, such as the CAF-II funds and the state's broadband expansion grants. There will be six workshops scheduled later this year across the state to educate the public on the state's efforts to expand broadband access and gather feedback. Communities will also be able to participate in a demand survey to assist the state in determining best methods of expansion efforts.

BadgerNet, the state's leased broadband infrastructure to schools, libraries, and government entities in all 72 counties, is up for contract renewal between the state and private providers. The Department of Administration is currently overseeing this contract renewal that will tentatively incorporate a collaborative plan that would evaluate access speeds, upgrade the infrastructure, and expand higher broadband speeds to these entities. Contract discussions will also include efforts to upgrade the existing BadgerNet infrastructure so that unaffiliated fiber lines might be integrated into or expanded from the BadgerNet infrastructure.

The next meeting of the Broadband Stakeholder Workgroup is scheduled for May.



New Overtime Rules

Last June, the U. S. Department of Labor proposed new rules that will make significant changes to overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The changes will more than double the salary threshold that determines if a worker is eligible for overtime when working more than 40 hours a week.

Currently, the salary limit for workers eligible for overtime pay is \$23,660 year and the proposed rule would bump this limit up to \$50,400 a year. The DOL estimates that in the first year alone, as many as 4.6 million workers would need to be either reclassified as non-exempt and paid overtime, or receive an increase in their salary to meet the new threshold requirement.

I visited with the Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce on Monday, and these changes were a hot topic of discussion. Many in the business community worry that the new rule has the potential to unintentionally lead to people losing their jobs and negatively impacting non-profits.

The DOL is also now speeding up its plan to release the final changes to the rule. Originally, the agency was planning on releasing the changes in July, but there has been a push to get them out this spring.

There hasn't been much publicity on the new rules, but I wanted to make sure that businesses in my district were aware of the new rules. It may be a good idea to start thinking ahead.

Calendar of Events

Upcoming Events

Start Date		Location
March 5	<u>Keyes Peak Winterfest</u>	Florence
March 5	<u>BRAAAAP Out Cancer</u>	St. Germain
March 5	<u>Ice Golf</u>	Minocqua
March 5	<u>Blast from the Past Vintage Snowmobile Show and Ride</u>	Suring
March 9	<u>VFW Hamburger Night</u>	Eagle River
March 12	<u>Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade</u>	Rhineland
March 12	<u>Pickerel-Pearson St. Patrick's Day Parade</u>	Pickerel
March 12	<u>Porcupine Hike</u>	Manitowish Waters
March 12	<u>Cabin Fever Party</u>	Boulder Junction
March 12	<u>American Legion Birthday Party Dinner Dance</u>	Three Lakes
March 17	<u>Sno-Buddies Corned Beef</u>	Conover
March 17	<u>St. Patrick's Day Supper</u>	Merrill
March 19	<u>Taste of Tomahawk</u>	Tomahawk
March 19	<u>Hodag Home Show</u>	Rhineland
March 19	<u>7th Annual Crooked Lake/Mountain Lions Spaghetti Dinner</u>	Crooked Lake
March 19	<u>Easter Bunny Breakfast and Egg Hunt</u>	Boulder Junction
March 19	<u>Huge Spring Craft & Vendor Sale</u>	Merrill
March 26	<u>Easter Egg Hunt</u>	Lakewood
March 26	<u>Easter Egg Hunt</u>	Merrill
April 2	<u>Phelps Maple Syrup Fest</u>	Phelps

As always, if you have any comments or thoughts regarding the subjects of this e-update, please feel free to contact me.

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